



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

FRENCH SYMBOLISM: IN POETRY AND IN PAINTING PART II ♣ BY EMMA K. S. SAWYER



ERLAINÉ is exclusively a poet; his instincts are neither patriotic nor popular, and so natural and instinctive is the music of his verse that Moore says of him, "It often seems to be no more than the melancholy inarticulated voice which nature speaks, penetrating and profound by reason of its vagueness and utterness." He has lived the prey of strange passions that have made a sad drama of his life. He has been in prison and has lived many years in exile. Moore

states farther: "Some poets write to tell how well women have loved them, others seek to record their exploits in the field, others desire to convince the reader of their excessive erudition, but I am not aware of any other poet except Verlaine who has written solely to tell how weak, helpless, and undistinguished he is in all ways and things." Nowhere do we find a trace of personal pride, even his afflictions he relates gently and without bitterness. A friend said that in talking with the poet he spoke of his miserable condition, but without any emphasis; he deplored the discomfort that the lack of the very smallest sums of money involved, but without even suggesting that after all it was a man of genius who suffered.

A few of the poets whose names are intimately associated with that of their leader Verlaine might be mentioned. Let us take a glimpse at some of the little coterie, as they sit at the Café François Premier. Here is Jean Moréas, dubbed a singing poet; Edouard Dujardin; Gustave Kahn, a wild-eyed young man, for whom neither verse nor prose suffice. "He uses the French language as a violin on which to play a Hungarian rhapsody, verses of seventeen syllables, interwoven with verses of eight." But here comes a fourth, who is sad to-night, his thoughts reverting to his friend Rimbaud. The story is singularly romantic. Arthur Rimbaud was a protégé of Verlaine. Their lives became very closely allied, and for many years they were inseparable. Then all at once their paths diverged. Rimbaud, after spending some months in a hospital, slowly recovering from a dangerous wound inflicted by his friend in a moment of uncontrollable passion, resolved to surrender any laurels that awaited him in the field of art and take the vows of a priest. He bade farewell to earthly fame and immured himself in a monastery on the shores of the Red Sea. Before starting for his retreat he consented to see Verlaine, to try and persuade him also to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, but Verlaine said "No," and they parted never to meet again, each one to work out his own salvation in his own way.

FRENCH Which one gained the greater victory? Who shall say? The world
SYMBOLISM: has only a few of Rimbaud's poems, sufficient, however, to show,
IN POETRY as his friend puts it, that "he carried in his heart all the riches of a
AND IN great poet."

PAINTING Jules Laforgue is another poet, who, had he lived, would have undoubtedly added much to the thought of the new school. His style was full of grace and fancy. The following are the names of some of his poems, "L'Imitation de Notre Dame la Lune," "Fleurs de Bonne Volonté," "Le Miracle des Roses." The very titles suggest much originality.

It has been said no one ever dreamed such beautiful, impossible dreams as Stephane Mallarmé. No one has ever so possessed his soul in the contemplation of masterpieces to come. All his life he has been haunted by the desire to create, not so much something new in literature, as a literature which should itself be a new art—a harmonizing of all the arts into one supreme art. Until the publication quite recently of a selection of "Vers en Prose," it was only possible to procure his poems in a limited and expensive edition, lithographed in fac-simile of his own clear and elegant handwriting. An aristocrat of letters, Mallarmé has wished neither to be read nor understood by the bourgeois intelligence. One of the school expresses himself thus:

"Mysticism! All poetry is there. Mysticism is the love of our hearts for the dreams of our brains; it is that which makes the vulgar hate us, which renders us proscribed."

According to M. Ghil it would appear that the syllables of the French language evoke in us the sensation of different colors, consequently the timbre of different instruments. The vowel "u" corresponds to the color yellow, and therefore to the sound of flutes. In looking further we find the very formation of a word is symbolic. Our words did not come into the world ready made, as Max Müller tells us, and we find that the chef d'école whom we have just been studying was most happy in his choice of words. His intuition for the use of words to express emotion and the "inexpressible" is almost invariably correct, and especially true is it of his love poems, which are more remarkable because they contain less expressed sense.

We read from George Vanor's writings, "To inscribe a dogma in a symbol, to choose for one's vocabulary rare and valuable terms, to constitute a superior and composite style, to translate sensations by the music of their syllables, is the idea of the new school." What the de Goncourt brothers have done in prose, Verlaine has achieved in verse. With them words are not merely color and sound—they live. In analysis as in description they have found out a way of noting the fine shades. Brunetière says that architecture, painting, and music have dominated literature, have given it "le ton," and served as its ideal. The classic art would have preferred architecture; the Romantics,

lured by the picturesque, and the Naturalists by the external aspect of things, would naturally choose painting; and it is remarkable that the above movement was inaugurated by two painters, Courbet and Manet.

FRENCH SYMBOLISM: IN POETRY AND IN PAINTING

The symbolists come to tell us of the intimate relation of being and things, and greet in music the art nearest akin to their ideal. The very titles of their books suggest this fact—"Romances sans Paroles" (Verlaine), "Complaintes" (Laforque). But few of the so-called followers of this movement can be classed with Verlaine. It has been justly said that many are impressionists because it is the fashion, symbolists because it is the vogue, decadents because decadence is the very air of the cafés. "Les vers libres" in the hands of most of the experimenters becomes merely rhymeless, irregular prose. "It is by Verlaine's genius," to quote M. Taine, "by his sincerity and simplicity, that he has been able to make his verse what he so admirably depicts in 'L'Art Poétique.'"

Although the new poets are devoted to the art of beautiful sounds, they are equally impressed with the shading of beautiful color. This is especially true of the symbolist painters. For instance, we find the shading of violet most significant, as interpreting the spiritual life. In the picture by Dubufe, "The Infant Jesus," exhibited at the World's Fair, we see the Madonna descending some marble steps, to the right is a colonnade with a trellis overhung with vines; here the infant Jesus is sleeping in a cradle, with angels guarding his slumbers. The mother is bathed in this violet light, while the bright sun's rays illumine the cradle. The arrangement of light suggests the dawn. The painting by Lucas, called "Fil de la Vierge" (air-thread), is also most symbolic. In this painting the Madonna is seated on the house-top beside a spinning wheel, her eyes closed as in a profound trance, and the light about her face indicates this fact. She has been in this rapt condition some time, for the birds have come and rested on her spinning wheel, while others have come and taken the thread and are scattering it broadcast, as the illuminating rays of truth were to be, later on. These messengers of the air thus symbolize the whole story for us. It is the moment of the immaculate conception. Many will recall "A Fortunate One" by Courtois, and "Vanitas Vanitatum" by Alfred Pierre Agache.

Prince Karageorgevitch, in writing of Puvis de Chavannes, says that this master's work is too supremely poetical to be understood of the many; only choice spirits, perhaps, can really feel his genius. One of the symbolists says: "Puvis de Chavannes, Gustav Moreau, Claude Monet, are masters, the only ones worthy to represent French art beside the great poets such as Paul Verlaine and Mallarmé. In England they have their Whistler and Burne-Jones, Belgium has her Maeterlinck."

FRENCH Morice says that "poetry and music seem to have comprehended
SYMBOLISM: one another simultaneously. Have they a common ideal, to attain
IN POETRY which each one's special methods are insufficient? For be it remem-
AND IN bered," he continues, "it is music of the highest order, the purest, the
PAINTING most lyrical that we love. For Meyerbeer and Rossini we have the
indifference of the Romantics, and I know no enthusiasts for Gounod.
That which we love in Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert,
Schumann, Berlioz and Wagner, is that which we adore in our pre-
ferred poets, and that also which we adore in Puvis de Chavannes,
Gustave Moreau, Besnard, Eugène Carrière, Cazin, Monticelli—that,
indeed, which other poets of the hour detect in these painters more
than in the musicians—is the same ideal under three different aspects.
Again, if music inspires us more profoundly and more generally than
painting, it is because the former is at the same time more removed
and yet more intimate, nearer the "origin de la fin des sentiments."
Line and color define time; the sound is no sooner heard than it
vanishes; it lives but to die; it is a great symbol. It awakens an echo;
it is ever an appeal towards the unknown, the mysterious, an expansion
of the soul. And all comes back; this ephemera is the voice of eter-
nity." He says farther, "Poetry can but paint with sound, and it is
most natural that it should appeal to music for the secret. It is said
of Monet that he makes his color sing, and of Raffaelli that he scans
the face to find the meaning of the physiognomy, the meaning of a
gesture in an attitude. Gustav Moreau exalts painting by his poems,
and Puvis de Chavannes says that the mysticism of these other art-
ists leads them to the Art of Religion, and that his mysticism leads
him to the Religion of Art."

"There is one common law which directs at this hour all artistic
efforts; and music, painting and poetry is the triple reflection of the
one central light." Paul Adam tells us that the coming epoch will be
mystical. Man will be the creator of his ecstasies and his heavens,
and the most astonishing part of the miracle will be that science will
humbly announce the discovery of the divine principle appearing
"au fond de ses creusets."

As new as seems this literary symbolism, it has existed from all time.
St. Cyril of Alexandria says, "The world must come back to spiri-
tual things." Again we read, "The duty of a wise poet is to use the
symbol, to seize the hidden mystery under symbolic form."

Jouffrey says, "The universe is but the ensemble of symbols.
And genius having become the perfect intelligence of symbols en-
closed in the visible world will no longer consist of legendary nar-
rations, and the analysis of passions, but in divinations of correspon-
dences of things with our ideas and dreams."

How little the new movement has been understood by some when
such a superficial and unjust verdict is passed upon it as the follow-

ing: "If a forest is to be depicted in their verses have a care that it is not green, but blue; that is the decadent color for a forest. A flower could not figure but under a new name; peculiar and sonorous; the lotus is allowed still, because we must go to the Indes to obtain it. If a flower is poisonous it has a place of honor. All this is seasoned with religion, for without God they could not have a devil," the critic goes on to state, "and without Satan it is impossible to be satanic, which is essentially the manner of a decadent." "They know well his charming manners," says an habitué of the Café Floupette, in speaking of the devil. "C'est un vrai gentleman, and besides, he is damned for all eternity, thus rendering him most interesting."

**FRENCH
SYMBOLISM:
IN POETRY
AND IN
PAINTING**

We know that a certain color evokes vague ideas of opulence, a certain perfume transports our imagination to the Orient, a certain sound will put us under a sad mood. By thus transposing, with the aid of these facts, a strangely subtle and refined art is produced, compared with that which the French poets have made use of, up to the present time. To suggest is for them the pure poetry. Everything else is literature. In "La Littérature de Tout à l'heure" we read, "The synthesis of art is the joyous dream of beautiful truth. The joy of art is not gayety, the joy is grave, harmonizing with all the manifestations of living. Joy is ideally human, under the spiritual conditions of humanity."

We must have solitude, peace in the soul to hear God. It is the counsel of the Infinite. The soul will acquire the certainty of its own eternity in this solitude, and through our super-consciousness we will apprehend that if there is no birth there is no death—(can there be any birth or death for man, the spiritual image and likeness of God?)—and that true life is to be one of the centres of the infinite vibration. The statement is made by a Yoghi that "We are vibrations in a universe of vibrations. According to the rate of vibration is the manifestation produced, whether in the physical, mental or spiritual world. We find the lower or slower vibrations belong to the physical, the next, mental, the next, psychical and the next, spiritual. As the vibrations become keyed to higher tones the revelations will unfold, but those not keyed to the higher tones will comprehend nothing, because it is beyond their rate of vibration. The new age, with all its spiritual lights and sixth sense, will understand its use.

"The spirit of discord will be banished from individuals and nations, disease will hide its head and take its place among the memories of a forgotten past, and even death will henceforth lose its power to terrify earth's children. When we can hear the sunsets in Western skies, or catch the notes of harmonies that rise from fields of flowers, we shall know what none can know by mere external sense. When men shall have developed their higher power they will not doubt the vibratory laws; they will hear a color and see a sound.

FRENCH "The rustle of the wind in a field of grain will seem to such a cease-
SYMBOLISM: less flow of waves of color, blending and interblending most har-
IN POETRY moniously. The colors are produced by vibrations to represent the
AND IN evolution of a human soul from animal to angel."
PAINTING

A distinguished Catholic writer who has the gift of prophecy seems to see glittering in the near future the aurora of a new triumph of the gospel. He says, "Between the eighteenth century and that which I call the twentieth, the clock of the earth marks an hour, slow and terrible; that of a transition. It is the terrible nineteenth century; eyes half open, distressingly awakened from its nightmare, 'il désire, il désire, O mon Dieu, comme jamais le monde n'a désiré.'"

The old forms, the ceremonial of the church, no longer satisfy. On the back of a photograph given the writer by a member of the Parliament of Religions, from India, he has inscribed these lines in Sanscrit from the Vedas, "Do not disturb the faith of the ignorant who hold to ceremonials, but by proper behaviour slowly lead them to come out of it by growing spiritual."

"Le fin de siècle" brings again a transition, but the spiritual significance of what the symbolists have done in the world of art will be a prime factor in moulding the thought at the dawn of the coming century, when we shall again see these "last fine shades" beautifully blending in the new symphony of song, the harmony of which shall transcend anything ever before heard. Surely it will be glory enough to have aided even in a humble degree such a triumphal entry.

Undoubtedly the world was never so ready to reach out and up for higher truths as it is to-day. We are all restless to obtain consciously or unconsciously that elusive sixth sense, which will unfold and make less mysterious what the poetry and painting of the new school would have us comprehend. And may we not add music to the poetry and painting, thus completing our triangle, and enabling us to convert this symbol into a powerful weapon with which to defend our ground should we be attacked by non-believers.

Let us carry away with us the impressive words of Morice: "The poet hears the hour ringing and goes to answer the call; neither the revolt against evil, nor charity for the evils, are functions of the poet. His duty is that of a prophet with upraised finger, which will guide those who, having eyes, can see."





Drawing by Miss Ethel Reed
for "Fairy Tales" by Miss Mabel Fuller Blodgett

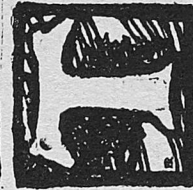
By permission of
Lamson, Wolfe & Co.
Boston



HE sound of voices died away,
But overhead complainingly
The bluebird flew with whirr of
wings,

The tree-toad trilled a coming
storm,

And from the parching meadow grass
The katydid proclaimed the heat.
"The law is often perfected
By lawlessness," her father said;



HE is most truly fair to-day,
He said, who stood beside his
horse,

Ready to mount but looking back
To where she stood upon the steps,

Crowned by an overhanging vine
Whose purple clusters touched her hair.

She must be very fair, he mused,
And then he glanced at her and saw
Her slender figure, clad in white,